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HOUSEKEEPERS' CHAT

Saturday, March 16, 1935.

(FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY)

Subject: "New Notes from Washington." Items of interest to women, from the United States Department of Agriculture.

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Today's the day for news from Washington, from your regular correspondent in the Nation's Capital. Her news concerns a birthday cake, the Camp Fire Girls, and Secretary Wallace, who gets honorable mention because he blew out the candles on the birthday cake, and then cut it.

..... But I'll read you the letter:

"Every once in a while," says your correspondent, "I realize that I was born thirty years too soon. Too soon to have been a member of such a jolly group as the Camp Fire Girls. Two hundred and fifty thousand of them celebrated the twenty-third birthday of their organization this month. The delegates who came here to Washington launched a national citizenship project. What do you think of that? Imagine these youngsters -- some of them look very small in their blue skirts, white middies, and red ties -- imagine them being interested in national citizenship projects! But they are -- and in birthday cakes, too.

"I must tell you about the beautiful white-frosted cake. Three little girls baked it, in the laboratory of the Bureau of Home Economics. When the cake was cold, they covered it with a thick vanilla icing, and stuck twenty-three candles around the edge. Then a photographer took its picture. When the cake had posed long enough, the Camp Fire Girls carried it across the street to the Administration building, to the office of the Secretary of Agriculture.

"A very little Camp Fire Girl, Ana May Kraft of Maryland, presented the cake to the Secretary, who blew out the candles and then cut the cake.

"The next day the Camp Fire Girls called at the White House, where they were greeted by the First Lady, who is chairman of the Camp Fire Girls' National Advisor Council. Mrs. Roosevelt told her visitors that citizenship begins at home, since the home is the foundation of the community. By being good home managers, she said, and thoughtful neighbors, they would be best prepared to understand the needs of others, and to consider wisely national problems of security. . . . Before they left the White House the girls were taken on a tour of the rooms, and of course they were especially interested in the White House kitchen, and in the new dishes.

"And now a few more words about the birthday cake. It was a three-layer four and a half inches high -- I think there must have been at least half an inch of frosting on the top. One of the young cooks let me sample the frosting left in the pan, and it tasted so good I asked for the recipe. Here it is -- a recipe tested by the Bureau of Home Economics. The Camp Fire Girls in your audience may want it for their cookbooks. This recipe, you'd better tell them, makes enough frosting for a two-layer cake."

All right, Camp Fire Girls -- here's the recipe, sent to you from Washington. Get your pencils and your notebooks, and I'll read it to you. . . First, the five ingredients: Sugar, one cup; cold water, four tablespoons; egg white, one; salt, one-eighth teaspoon; vanilla, one-half teaspoon.

Now, the method of putting these ingredients together, using a double boiler. First, put the sugar, water, and the unbeaten egg white in the top part of the double boiler. The water in the lower part of the double boiler should be boiling. Commence beating the mixture with a Dover egg beater right away, and keep on beating while it cooks for about ten minutes. By that time the mixture will look like ordinary boiled icing, and should be almost thick enough to spread. Take it from the stove, add the vanilla, and continue to beat until it has thickened, and holds its shape on the egg beater. Don't spread the icing on the cake until the cake is cold.

One of the nice things about this recipe, says your Washington correspondent, is that if you don't cook it quite enough the first time, you can put it back on the double boiler and cook it a little longer. Or, if it's too stiff, you can add a little water and cook it again. I think the women in the Bureau of Home Economics were wise to choose such an easy recipe for small girls to follow. They surely would have been disappointed, if they had tried to ice a cake for a birthday party, and the icing had not behaved properly! So much for the cake, and the vanilla icing -- or frosting -- whichever you choose to call it.

Now here are a few brief items of interest to the lady who buys the family groceries. She may as well know what to expect of food prices.

First, production of eggs on February first was the smallest in ten years. Reasons, reduced number of laying hens, higher feed prices, and severe weather in late January.

Second, prices of dairy products -- milk, butter, and cheese -- are the highest in more than four years.

Third, Jack Frost did all he could to cut down the citrus crops this year, but he was not very successful. The combined production of oranges and grapefruit is actually larger this year than last.

Says your Washington correspondent: "I'll conclude with that good news, which reminds me that the Camp Fire Girls made some delicious candied grapefruit peel, while they were in the laboratory of the Bureau of Home Economics. The girls had just finished cooking the grapefruit peel when I dropped in to see them, and had placed the neat narrow strips on waxed paper to cool, before rolling it in granulated sugar. It looked mighty good -- I was sorry I couldn't stay long enough to taste the finished confection."

And that's all of our Washington letter for today. Next Saturday we'll expect to hear more news. . . . and I'll be with you Monday, as usual.



